



**Summary of good practises identified during
the European Statistics Code of Practice peer reviews carried out during 2006-2008**

structured according to the statistical value chain

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1. Background/ Framework

- **Legal basis**

(Ireland) Legislative background. The Statistics Act, being from 1993 is quite modern and was thus able to take into account the evolution of practices in the recent years. It could be used as a model by other countries. The Act defines the institutional structure of the CSO, the National Statistical Board and the conditions for the appointment of Director General, as well as the status of Officers of Statistics, also ensuring independence and statistical confidentiality. The Act also defines the CSO mandate for collection of information. This mandate is very wide and includes the use of records of other public authorities for statistical purpose (free of charge). The use of non-identifiable data for statistical purpose is also covered under the Act such as to avoid any conflicts with the National Data Protection provisions. It is subject to the conditions and restrictions that the Director General may provide. Offences and penalties are described (comment: it was remarked that unfortunately penalties are specified in fixed amounts and tend to be considered too light in current circumstances in respect of multinational enterprises which do not respond). ([European Statistics Code of Practice](#) (further on – Code of Practice), Principle 1, Professional independence)

(The Netherlands) The CBS has responsibility for a major part of official statistics in the Netherlands and is considered to have a **strong and independent basis**, especially through the Statistics Netherlands Act from November 2003 giving the **CBS a separate legal personality**. The CBS has also **a strong methodological basis** in several areas and thus has a very high degree of compliance in the area of statistical confidentiality. ([Code of Practice](#), Principles 1 Professional Independence and 5, Statistical Confidentiality)

(Slovenia) Statistics Act - the law unambiguously defines the **professional independence** of the Office and its Director General in particular; SORS' right of access to administrative data for statistical purposes; the protection of confidentiality; and the framework for SORS' planning on behalf of the Slovenian Statistical System. ([Code of Practice](#), Principles 1, Professional independence, 2 Mandate for Data collection and 5 Statistical Confidentiality)

(Czech Republic) The Czech State Statistical Service Act guarantees the **professional/political independence** of the Czech statistical authorities. The President of the CzSO is guaranteed independence in matters of production and dissemination. The President can and does participate in meetings of the Cabinet. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 1, Professional independence)

(Lithuania): Statistics Lithuania (SL) **uses the national Law of Statistics to implement the principles of European Statistics Code of Practice in Lithuania**. SL is planning to submit to the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania before the end of 2007 amendments of the Law on Statistics and other related acts with specification of principles of European Statistics Code of Practice.

(Liechtenstein) Principles of the Code of Practice are an element of the new Statistical Law.

(Eurostat) Passage of the new “**Proposal of the Commission for a Regulation on European Statistics**” will further **strengthen Eurostat’s statistical leadership role within Europe** and will **improve the institutional setting for official statistics activities in Europe**.

- **Coordination instruments**

(Poland): Coordination activities among producers of official statistics. Extensive consultation with users and producers of statistics in Statistical Council. The GUS has an active tradition for close cooperation with ministries and Government Agencies about data capture and production of statistics. The importance of respecting the principles of official statistics is well taken care of by all partners.

(Portugal) The review team has identified the approach being taken to **strategic planning in the Portuguese statistical system** as an example of good practice in European Statistics. In particular, the team noted that there is an overall strategy for the National Statistical System – i.e. the Statistical Council's *General Guidelines of National Statistical Activity, 2008-2012*. Statistics Portugal's work programme for 2008 sets out all statistical activities and the full dissemination plan for the entire national system.

(Poland): Methodological co-operation in the range of:

- public deficit and debt

In June 2004 formal General Government Statistics Working Group (GGSWG) was established by decree of the President of the Central Statistical Office of Poland. It used to consist of representatives of CSO, Ministry of Finance and National Bank of Poland. In 2007 representatives of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister dealing with so called "performance budgeted" and the new budgetary classification joined the Group. The GGSWG meets on regular basis and deals with data sources availability and methodological issues for the compilation of public deficit and debt as well as annual and quarterly government statistics. An official document (annual report) is produced once a year and submitted to MoF and NBP.

- agricultural surveys

The Central Statistical Office closely co-operates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as with other institutions involved in conducting of agricultural surveys at the stage of survey preparations and data analysis. Methodological co-operation concerns sampling frame, definitions, results precision, timeliness and accuracy. Possibility of the use of administrative sources for statistical purposes is also discussed with the gestures of particular registers.

- specialized surveys, for example: energy, environment protection

In these statistical domains the complex use and integration of variety/different information sources are very important. Adequate governmental organizations carry out the specialized surveys. CSO has very good experiences in long-term cooperation with these organizations.

(Hungary) The National Data Collection Programme, which has the objective of coordinating the data collection activities of the agencies in the Hungarian Statistical System, ensures that overlaps etc. are avoided thus making the data collection more efficient while lowering the response burden. The statistical data collections involving obligatory data supply – with the exception of those ordered by law – are included in the annual national statistical data collection programme of the official statistical service. The draft programme is drawn up by the HCSO based on the proposals of the bodies belonging to the official statistical service. In order to support the operation and the co-ordination of the work of the official statistical service, a National Statistical Council operates as a professional advisory and opinion-forming body beside the President of the HCSO. The NSC expresses its opinion on the programme submitted by the HCSO primarily from the point of view of necessity and professionalism of data collections and the burden they mean represents for the data suppliers and in order to avoid duplication of works. The president of the HCSO finalises the programme considering the NSC opinion. In the final phase of the procedure the government releases the decree on the programme and obligation of data supply.

(Luxembourg) A close cooperation with neighbouring (regional) statistical offices was already started in 1974. What is called the Greater Region comprises Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Wallonia. As an **outcome of this cooperation** (see http://www.grande-region.lu/flash_version.aspx) a **number of publications** are issued and some **research** was done aiming at improving the comparability of statistical results.

- **Ethical standards**

(Iceland): The **European Code of Practice has been formally adopted** by the Icelandic Government as binding for official statistics in Iceland and published in the Official Journal on 9 June 2006. The Code of Practice is available at Statistics Iceland website.

(Switzerland) The **Charter for Public Statistics is an important milestone for the Swiss statistical system** its further extension and implementation is important to improve the overall quality of Swiss public statistics.

2. Management

- **Financing**

(Hungary) **Cost based monitoring and planning for an efficient management** in a time of important organisational changes and budget reductions. HCSO has created two basic nomenclatures: "programmes" and "activities". The programme nomenclature is being used to identify the tasks that need human and financial resources. "Activities" determine the workflow of a programme element. Planning software exists in the Office. The units of HCSO plan their annual tasks' resource needs with this software in a monthly breakdown, in the frame of an internal iteration procedure. This results into an annual resource plan. There is an electronic system for registration of hours worked, where employees break down their daily work by the same nomenclatures. The Financial section is operating an integrated financial system where incoming bills are also recorded with the programme element id. number. The linking of these systems gives exact overview and comparison of planned and actual costs from organisation, time, programmes and activities dimensions. These data are analysed and reports are being produced on resource needs and usage. These are published in the Management Information System. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 10, Cost Effectiveness)

- **Planning**

(Austria) Statistics Austria has implemented in an exemplary manner **business planning** by integrating strategic perspectives, annual objectives and ex-post activity reporting. Its multi-annual strategic plan establishes clear links to its mission statement, and identifies long-term objectives and implementing measures in a very concise and operational way. The measures' innovative character reflects the way in which the strategic plan has been developed involving junior staff, middle and top management as well as the Statistical and Economic Councils. Statistics Austria's annual work programme details the objectives by statistical domain including references to "negative priorities". A summary table of the main products for each domain complements the picture. As a third element an annual activity report complements the approach reporting in detail on the work carried out (including information on work that could not be carried out) with a summary overview of the main statistical products assessing the implementation of the plan. In order to develop this approach further, the implementation of the business plan could be complemented by setting concrete targets, against which progress could be monitored. In addition, other readily available quality elements could be added to the overview tables which currently focus on punctuality only.

- **Total Quality Management** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 4, Quality commitment)

(Finland) Quality management

- Publishing policy of Statistics Finland (in Quality Guidelines for Official Statistics, 2nd Edition).
- Guides and manuals for employees (e.g. Guide on Professional Ethics, Quality Guidelines for Official Statistics, Guidelines on the Granting of User Licence to Statistics Finland's Unit-level Data etc.).
- The network of quality auditors within the office has common meetings and co-ordinates quality work in the departments.
- 27 officials have obtained national quality training certification after a 11 day training on quality.
- Participation in national EFQM Award Competition gave a thorough evaluation report and benchmarking with best Finnish organisations. Statistics Finland (SF) scored 351-400 points, the threshold for the EFQM Recognised for Excellence label is 400 points.
- Internal quality competition activates once a year units and persons to represent their good practices or projects building up SF strategy. Best projects and practices are prized with money.
- Active contribution to European quality activities.
- There is an internal list of corrections made to published data which is used to determine the reasons for errors and to avoid them in future. List is part of the regular follow up procedure.

(Lithuania) Statistics Lithuania (SL) has a very **systematic approach to quality management**. The quality framework of Statistics Lithuania includes from the EU level the Quality Declaration of the European Statistical System, LEG Recommendations, the European Statistics Code of Practice and EU Legislation and from the national level the Strategy of Statistics Lithuania as well as user requirements and expectations. Based on this quality framework SL has implemented/is developing a quality management system which includes:

- a process-orientation of its data-entry, processing and dissemination systems;
- survey software which will automatically record quality characteristics on data entry and processing;
- a regular monitoring of performance of the Regional Statistical Offices;
- systematic self-assessment surveys of survey-managers based on the DESAP checklist;
- regular user satisfaction surveys.

At the end of 2007 SL plans for an independent certification audit of the SL Quality Management System against ISO 9001:2000.

(Slovakia): The SO SR has successfully adapted the **Quality Management System (QMS) methodology** – according to **ISO 9001:2000** – to the management of a public institution producing statistics, showing that QMS is also suitable for the management of a National Statistical Institute. Customer orientation, process approach (managerial, value adding, supporting processes) and systematic management are the leading principles of this initiative. Value added processes include National Accounts and Macroeconomic Statistics, Business Statistics, Social Statistics and Demography and Regional Statistics. Each of these processes has been decomposed into sub-processes and activities in order to properly cover the production and dissemination of all the specific domains. From 2005 to 2007 all processes have been documented and quality audits conducted to identify areas for improvements. The SO SR received the ISO 9001:2000 certification in November 2006 and a re-certification is planned for 2009.

(Portugal) The structure adopted by Statistics Portugal for **Quality Assurance** is an example of good practice in the European Statistical System. A quality management system was introduced in 1996, geared towards ISO norms. The Quality Management Unit has put in place quality instruments and procedures to promote continuous improvement of products, processes and services for customers, with involvement at all levels of the organisation. These include the recently revised *Statistical Production Procedures Handbook* and a renewed programme of internal and external audits.

(Eurostat) To the Review Panel, the standout feature is **Eurostat's leadership within the European Statistical System on all aspects of quality management and the Data Quality Framework.**

- **Human resources management**

(Norway) A **formal approach to human resource development** through continuous training in quality, communication, methodology, etc... Especially the training in project and teamwork and development of Quality Pilots, who participate in improvement projects as facilitators to ensure that quality principles are followed. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 4, Quality commitment)

(Latvia) CSB's draft **HR strategy** addresses the key issues in relation to retaining and building the statistical and IT skills base needed by a National Statistical Institute. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 3, Adequacy of resources)

(Sweden) In order to improve **communication** (in both directions, top-down and bottom-up) between **top management and young officials working** at Statistics Sweden, a "**Youth Council**" has been recently created comprising 14 young statisticians (less than 30 years old). They are appointed for two years on the basis of proposals by each department. This "Youth Council" meets the DG and DDG 3 or 4 times a year and minutes of the debates are put on the intranet.

- **Training**

(Hungary) The **HCSO Statistical school**, which is preparing staff for careers in HCSO, has a general focus on methodology as well as on all issues related to quality and confidentiality. Trainers and instructors of the HCSO school are mainly active or retired staff-experts of the HCSO, only some special courses (e.g. manager trainings) are conducted by external firms or experts. The HCSO-school is aimed at raising professional standards and developing convertible skills needed to fulfil new requirements facing the office. Training is seen a tool to assist everyday duties and react on actual needs. The most important feature of the new internal training system of the HCSO is the huge number of participants: while the office can yearly delegate only 10-15 colleagues to about 20 international courses, in 2006 the HCSO School provided 70 courses for more than 1000 staff members. It means that almost every colleague was affected by the internal training. And more than 100 from the staff contributed as trainer or instructor to the courses. The new training system is also intended to hold together and systematise the dispersed training activities all over the office organised by different departments and sections. By providing training in the Statistical school the HCSO hopes to educate a quality staff that should improve the attraction of statistical profession and enhance the image of the office. And as qualification and training is intended to be connected with a new internal career program, training can also contribute to the commitment of the staff. Further advantage of internal training is that personal connections between trainers and participants facilitate everyday cooperation. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 4, Quality commitment)

(Romania) The **National Center for Training in Statistics (NCTS)**, which ensures a sustained training on professional issues for staff of INS, including those from its regional offices. This is an asset in competing for good quality staff on the labour market. It could be used e.g. for improving the analytical skills of staff. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 4, Quality commitment)

- **Mobility**

(France) The **French statistical system** benefits from an impressive **mobility policy** managed by a dedicated unit in Insee. The main principle is that staff moves about every four years. Mobility is organised on a yearly basis by publishing the extensive list of Insee and ministerial statistical services posts, including regional posts, involved in the changes, with each entry containing detailed information

on the post involved. The policy helps share skills and best practices, improves professionalism, and results in a high staff loyalty, and this in turn enhances the reputation of Insee and the ministerial offices, both from technological and deontological points of view.

(UK) Mobility of staff within the government statistical system: Mobility of statistical staff between the departments is made possible and encouraged by statistical authorities, and it is expected to continue in the new institutional arrangements. Staff of other departments involved in official statistics can participate in recruitment schemes. The GSS wide intranet (Statnet) is used for information on staff vacancies.

- **Other policies related to management**

(Ireland) Transparency and accountability through a lot of important **corporate documents, posted on the website**. The following documents are on the CSO website ([Code of Practice](http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/corporate_publications.htm), Principle 1, Professional Independence) (www.cso.ie/releasespublications/corporate_publications.htm) :

Statements of Strategy

- › [Statement of Strategy 2004 - 2006](#)
- › [Statement of Strategy 2004 - 2006 Progress Report 2004](#)
- › [Statement of Strategy 2004 - 2006 Progress Report 2005](#)

Customer Service Publications

- › [CSO Customer Service Action Plan 2004 - 2006](#)
- › [CSO Customer Service Plan 2001 - 2003](#)
- › [CSO Guide to Publications and Information Services](#)
- › [Human Resources Strategy 2004 - 2006](#)

Other Corporate Publications

- › [Statistical Potential of Business and Environment Enterprise Data Holdings in Selected Government Departments - Working Report](#)
- › [CSO Data Protocol](#)
- › [Statistical Potential of Administrative Records - Working Report](#)
- › [Expenditure Review Report - Social and Demographic Statistics Directorate](#) › [National Statistics Board Policy Needs for Statistical Data on Enterprises](#)

The National Statistical Board has also a clear website (www.nsb.ie/pub_documents.htm) disseminating strategy documents and progress reports over a period of years.

(Hungary): The re-organisation of the regional offices into offices specialised in specific statistical domains. The new organisational-operational model launched early in 2007 changes essentially the division of labour, the relations of statistical departments and regional directorates and data providers' relations. At the level of organisation model two forms of competence centres were worked out. In the absolute competence centre only one organisational unit performs all the activities of the statistical area concerned. So the competence, the responsibility and authority are focused at one place. In the partial competence centre the division of labour is based on the separation of production process phases. The production unit is established to organise and implement data collections and perform data entry and correction, while the statistical unit is organised to perform the tasks of the other four phases. In the new model, unlike the former practice, the production units fulfil their assigned tasks at national level. Three competence centres were established: population statistics competence centre, agricultural statistics competence centre and Business Statistics Department. Centralisation of statistical activities contributes to reducing respondent burden and decreasing questionnaire and sample size.

3. Users and respondents dialogue

- **User communication**

(Iceland): Statistics Iceland benefits from a very close cooperation with users. This is to a certain extent due to the small size of the Icelandic society and the spatial proximity of the institution and its users. Nevertheless, the intensive cooperation with users and their frequent consultation has been put on an institutional level. Two user groups, on price statistics and national accounts, and one advisory group on wages have been set up. The user and advisory groups unite both users and cooperative partners in the production of statistics. The meetings are organised in an open manner, with participants raising subject to be discussed. Minutes are recorded and published. This creates a very open style of managing statistics. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 11, Relevance)

(Malta) NSO was notably successful in establishing close professional contacts with important partners and users in Malta. During the Peer Review interviews, it was frequently mentioned that NSO staff were very knowledgeable about their specialised fields, enabling them to interact effectively with their partners and users. This facilitates good relations with the important economic sectors in Malta. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Cyprus) CYSTAT has a very good service culture. The review team found considerable evidence with users commenting on the excellent levels of service provided to them. Not only did users find good support with information about released data, but they also received good service with tailor-made tables. This was confirmed with discussions with staff who highlighted their culture of responding effectively with user requests. Additionally the Statistics Council provides a channel for the key statistical users to influence the work programme of CYSTAT. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Norway): Statistics Norway enjoys a high level of credibility and trust in the Norwegian society. Professional independence, a **service culture and professionalism** are the key drivers. Moreover, there is a very good awareness among all stakeholders about the existence and importance of a solid and comprehensive legal act relating to official statistics and Statistics Norway.

(Liechtenstein) Users' recommendations are integrated in publications whenever possible. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 11, Relevance)

(Malta) “Promoting Statistical Literacy” is another good example of the efforts of NSO to better communication with actual and future users of statistics. Presented in the form of the policy of the NSO, the NSO document includes a variety of forms and activities promoting general knowledge of statistics and stimulating interest in statistical data including practical use of statistics. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Portugal) ALEA is a statistical literacy project jointly developed by Statistics Portugal and a secondary school. The project website, www.alea.pt, provides a range of educational resources aimed mainly at secondary school teachers and pupils. The project is an example of good practice in promoting statistical literacy and awareness in education and in society generally. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Finland) Communication

- Open and transparent management of the office.
- Statistics Finland's **eCourse** in Statistics (http://www.stat.fi/tup/verkkokoulu/index_en.html) ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

- Invitation of parliamentary groups to visit Statistics Finland at the start of a new Parliament. Practically all groups attend in their turn. The visit contains a presentation of Statistics Finland, presentation of its operating principles and reviews of up-to-date statistics.

(Malta) The Library and Information Unit at NSO provides an **effective centralised service for responding to ad hoc data requests**. It is able to handle inquiries by phone, fax, post, and email, as well as through a request form on the website. Pricing for provision of customised data is clearly explained on the website. Users seemed to find this service worked well. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

- **Communication with respondents**

(Portugal) The **Simplified Business Information** project is a good example of innovation and co-ordination in the National Statistical System. Annual returns by business to Statistics Portugal, the Bank of Portugal, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice (registration of annual accounts) have been co-ordinated in a single electronic submission, reducing response burden while improving the coverage of structural business statistics. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents)

(Cyprus) CYSTAT benefits from very **high response rates to its surveys**. High response rates are important in the quality of data publication and in the efficiency of data processing. Response rates are supported by the legal backing for compulsory collection and the use of interviewers to collect all data. High response rates are critical for quality statistics (in a small country). ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 2, Mandate for data collection)

(Bulgaria) The **contacts between the Regional Statistical Offices and respondents** are very close. On the regional level differences in the ethnical and cultural background of the respondents can be duly taken into account when carrying out surveys. The good co-operation helps to keep the rates of unit non-response low. The NSI provides feedback to households participating in surveys on a voluntary basis. For example, persons who were respondents in the household expenditure survey received a little brochure with the main results of the survey. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents)

(Spain) INE Spain **offers reporting enterprises free of charge data** tailored to their needs. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents)

- **Respondent burden**

(Austria) Measuring respondents' burdens In line with its legal requirement to minimise respondents' burden (in particular Art. 24,3 of the Federal Statistics Act), Statistics Austria in co-operation with the Austrian Economic Chamber publishes a Respondents' Burden Barometer including information on the development over time based on measuring the time taken to complete a questionnaire. In the future (2007) this will be supplemented by an assessment on the basis of the standard cost model providing providing a baseline to set targets against. <http://www.statistik.at/respondenten/index.shtml>. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents).

(Denmark) Measurement of response burden for business statistics. Statistics Denmark measures annually the burden on businesses from statistics, according to a standardized model. The measurement is part of a total measurement on the administrative burden on businesses in Denmark. The experiences gained in Denmark have contributed to the method that will be used all over Europe as part of the EU Action Plan on reduction of the administrative burden. The administrative burden on businesses emanating from statistics is very low in Denmark. In 2005, it was just 0.5 percent of the total

administrative burden. The extensive use of data from administrative sources is the reason for this low percentage. Statistics Denmark makes an annual report on response burden, which includes the initiatives taken to limit the burden. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents).

4. Practices relating to the whole statistical value chain ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 10 Cost effectiveness)

(Czech Republic) The project of **Redesign of the statistical survey system** in the Czech Republic is a strategic development project aiming to improve the quality of the Czech statistics in all dimensions. The members of the working groups and the project-leaders of this project are “**young statisticians**” of the CzSO. Through this project they are given a strategic role to form their own future statistical work environment.

(France) The RESANE (Refonte des Statistiques ANnuelles d'Entreprises) project, which involves a radical **redesign of the system of structural business statistics**, is striking in its scale and ambition. It will result in a single register with all enterprises, local units, enterprise groups and subgroups, and with ownership links between them. It focuses on three main areas:

- Greater use of administrative sources: The use of annual enterprise surveys will virtually cease, with most of the required data being collected from relevant administrative sources.
- Major process re-engineering: RESANE plans to merge many existing cumbersome processes into one efficient unified process. Currently, a range of sources is treated independently, and this will change to a consolidated system with each enterprise being treated only once.
- Coverage of enterprise groups: RESANE will allow the enterprise group to become a major observation unit for economic statistics.

When implemented, RESANE should offer very considerable benefits: a sizeable reduction in the burden on respondents, improved coherence and quality, a timelier publication of survey results, considerable productivity gains, and a better coverage of the role of enterprise groups in the economy. It is expected that the new system will be operational in early 2009 in respect of the year 2008.

(Sweden): The diversity and the specificities of production processes is an important factor of inefficiency in most statistical institutes. To try to rationalize this diversity, in September 2006 Statistics Sweden embarked on a very ambitious project (named LOTTA) to **streamline these production processes by creating common tools and methods at a central level for every cluster of processes**. The project is intended to reduce costs and increase quality, thereby also benefiting both customers and data providers. Moreover the LOTTA project aims also at developing staff competence.

(Greece) One very interesting practice in the NSSG relates to the **close involvement and interaction between the methodology unit and the production units**. When a new survey or indicator is proposed, the relevant production unit makes a proposal for different aspects of the methodology. This is examined by the methodology unit and (after exchanges if needed) the approach, the definitions, etc are agreed between the two units. The methodology unit then selects the sample for the enquiry from the register. The production unit sends out the questionnaires and receives them back. These are forwarded to the Informatics Division for processing. The dissemination tables as well as control tables are created and checked. The methodology unit then compiles the figures, including operations like treatment of outliers, imputation for non-response, grossing up and so on. Finally the results are passed to the production unit for publication. Such very close interaction is probably rare and worth studying. Some statisticians might be concerned that this blurs the responsibility for the final figures, but it seems to work well in Greece. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 7, Sound methodology)

- **Cooperation with scientific community to improve methodology** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 7, Sound methodology)

(Romania) There are many forms of **successful cooperation and interactions between INS and universities/research communities**, from which both sides benefit: participation in the CEM committee; regular user of microdata from INS with feed-back given on results; jointly organised training in universities; traineeships for students in INS; and joint research projects. This is instrumental in enhancing the perception of INS as professional science-based institution, and in ensuring the support of the research community for INS with the decision-makers on resources.

(Bulgaria) Recently the NSI started a **co-operation with the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"** based on a formal agreement. The intention is to offer better **methodological training to NSI staff** and to **facilitate access to data for research purposes**. This co-operation is intended to make more supporting analysis available and help to recruit skilled staff.

(Latvia): In the discussion of accessibility and clarity, the review team found evidence of **good linkages and communications between CSB, academia and the Latvian Statistical Association**. This makes a positive contribution to user dialogue and can potentially assist in providing the skills base need by CSO into the future.

5. Statistical design

- **Classifications** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 7, Sound methodology)

(Luxembourg) Since early 2006 it has been possible to **consult the NACE codes attributed to legal units** by Statec on the Ministry of Economy and Foreign Trade companies' portal (<http://www.entreprises.public.lu>).

(Spain) INE Spain has introduced AYUDACOD, a special tool, to promote a **harmonised use of the different statistical classification**. The search system was made publicly available on the Internet in 2002.

6. Data collection

- **Practises related to the use of administrative data**

(Denmark) Use of administrative data. Register based statistics are very advanced in Denmark. The first complete register based population and housing census was made in 1981, enabled by the Central Register of Buildings and Dwellings from 1977. The Act on the Central Business Register dates from 1976. The register based statistics has since then developed considerably. The development has been facilitated by the Act for Statistics Denmark obliging public authorities and institutions to submit on request the information they possess to Statistics Denmark. During the interviews with users and producers, the high quality of register based statistics was widely recognized. The use of administrative data has developed in the Nordic countries along similar lines. This development has been facilitated by a close Nordic co-operation, for example by organising joint seminars. In the recent seminar on register based statistics in May 2007, also other countries were invited, thus extending the exchange of experiences. A joint Nordic paper "Register-based statistics in the Nordic countries – Review of best practices with focus on population and social statistics" will be published by UNECE in the near future. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 2, Mandate for data collection)

(Estonia) Use of administrative data. Article 4 of the Official Statistics Act provides Statistics Estonia with an extensive right to use data contained in databases resulting from, or collected in the course of, the activities of state and local government agencies and other legal persons. Article 5 of the law lays down that such data shall be primarily used but with the explicit provision that the composition and quality of the data conform, in the opinion of the agencies conducting the statistical surveys, to the required methodology for the surveys. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 2, Mandate for data collection)

(Norway): Statistics Norway is leading in the **development of statistics with the use of registers.** This is based on a legal act that allows the extensive use of the public registers, security systems assuring the right use of the information, and the continuous collaboration and co-ordination of work between the 'owners' of administrative data and Statistics Norway. This wide use of administrative data allows reductions in response burden, which is one of the strategic objectives set out by Statistics Norway. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 2, Mandate for data collection, Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents)

(Switzerland) The FSO has a **clear strategy to develop the use of administrative sources and registers in order to improve efficiency and reduce response burden.** This is a major challenge, especially given the rather complex institutional and legal situation, and good progress is being made and positive experiences can be shared. ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 2, Mandate for data collection, Principle 9, Non-excessive burden on respondents)

Please also see Section 3 (Users and respondents dialogue), under "Communication with respondents"

7. Data compilation and estimation

- **Adjustment methods** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 8, Appropriate statistical procedures)

(Hungary): A **centralised Seasonal Adjustment system**, allowing a harmonised approach to seasonal adjustment throughout HCSO. The seasonal adjustment procedure is carried out according to Eurostat recommendations, tested and evaluated methods. There is a written regulation of the president on the procedure and documentation. The quality of seasonal adjustment is monitored and regularly (at least once a year) reviewed by experts from the Statistical Research and Methodology Department. That resulted in a centralized and standardized quality approach in the case of seasonal adjustment.

8. Disclosure control and confidentiality

- **Confidentiality policy** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 5, Statistical confidentiality)

(Italy) Well documented solutions and regulations for **handling confidential data.** The legislative decree of September 1989 and the Personal Data Protection Code (legislative decree N° 196 of 30 June 2003) are the basis for protection of privacy in statistical data. They are enforced by directives issued by the president of ISTAT, which are periodically adjusted to changes of risk estimates. It is worth mentioning that staff members of ISTAT are informed of, and periodically trained on, confidentiality rules.

(Germany) CENEX. The Federal Statistical Office participates in the **CENEX on the issue of data confidentiality.** This CENEX might solve the high costs of guaranteeing the confidentiality with the publication of data by the statistical offices of the Länder and the Federal Statistical Office. This problem is identical to the one which faces Eurostat and the member states.

(Eurostat) In terms of the Statistics Code of Practice, **Eurostat ranks strongly in terms of Principle 5 (Statistical Confidentiality), and Principle 6 (Impartiality and Objectivity).**

- **Micro-data access for research purposes** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 5, Statistical confidentiality and Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Denmark) Micro data policy. Statistics Denmark is a pioneer in finding solutions to give better service to researchers' who need access to microdata for statistical purposes. In 2001 The Research Service Unit was created with the special duty to improve researchers' access to microdata. Since 2001 researchers can process microdata sets from their own PC, connected via Internet to a server at Statistics Denmark. All data processing is done in Statistics Denmark and data cannot be transferred to the researcher's computer. The researchers can order the results to be promptly transferred to him via e-mail. E-mails are checked by the Research Service Unit to ensure that no user/researcher is misusing their access rights. The access via internet is only granted to researcher and analytical environments authorized by the National Statistician. The rules governing the researcher and analytical environments than can be authorized as well as the microdata to which they can get access are accessible from Statistics Denmark's website. The researchers/analysts are subject to the rules governing professional secrecy and breach of the duty of non-disclosure is punishable. Confidentiality is also protected by the agreement signed between SD and researchers where it is mentioned researchers will be not able to use the researcher schemes of Statistics Denmark for a period of not less than 3 years or permanently, if they breach the confidentiality.

(Italy) Controlled micro data access - even if there is a need to develop the service for users outside ISTAT. **Applications for access to microdata** are strictly controlled. Researchers have to declare the purpose of their research and the unit where the research will be conducted, they sign a contract with ISTAT once their request has been accepted, and they cannot use Internet for the transfer of data. The establishment of a unique repository for microdata bases by ISTAT is another efficient tool of control over the access to microdata.

(Slovenia): Access to microdata for research - SORS provides carefully controlled access to microdata, according to well-defined Protocols. The research community accepts the obligations placed upon it. An on-site laboratory with a stand-alone computer is supported by SORS staff, who ensure that no disclosive information is removed from the Office.

(Iceland): Statistics Iceland has managed the **access to microdata** well. A standing committee consisting of the Deputy Director General and the other two Directors of Statistics Iceland decides on access as well as the terms of access according to the perceived risks. The decisions are recorded for later access and development. This treatment of access requests may result in different conditions of access for researchers but it allows a very effective risk management practice, especially with the constraint of the small Icelandic population.

(Norway): A very efficient approach is ensuring confidentiality while allowing access to microdata for research purposes. A Security Committee, which is part of the organisation and management of Statistics Norway, is responsible for the security of both the premises and the documentation used in the different stages of the statistical production process. Besides, there is a privacy ombudsman, who has adviser and controller functions. Regarding confidentiality issues, a Confidentiality Committee has been set and is in charge of solving all doubts that could arise on the delivery of microdata for a particular project. On the other hand, all this security measures are reflected in clear rules and written agreements to be signed by researchers and public planners accessing microdata.

(Finland) Screening of the research projects rather than the researchers, when granting permissions to use micro data. When researchers are granted a permission to use micro-data, their research plan has to be attached to the application.

(Germany) The Research Data Centre. The Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Federal Statistical Offices have set up a wide range of services for the scientific community of Germany. An extensive range of micro data of official statistics has been made available to the scientific community. Furthermore, for providing also comfortable access to these statistics, various ways of data use were established. These services are highly appreciated by the scientific community.

(Germany) Scientific Use Files. The Federal Statistical Office grants scientists privileged access on a legal basis to official microdata.

(Germany) Campus file. A special offer to students is a campus file of 1998 wage and income tax statistics which is made available free of charge for download.

(Spain) INE Spain has made **available 22 standard anonymized microdata sets** (file standard) on the website free of charge and these are related to 22 corresponding specific surveys (starting from June 2005).

9. Documentation

- **Metadata** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 6, Impartiality and objectivity, Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Portugal): The documentation and integration of **metadata** on the Statistics Portugal website, www.ine.pt, is considered to be another example of good practice. The website was revised in June 2007 and it provides easy access to data and to the related metadata and methodological documents.

(Switzerland) The FSO has developed quite **well structured documentation of surveys (metadata)**, not only of surveys of the FSO. In most cases it is in three languages (French, German, Italian) and to an increasing degree in English. The FSO has been working hard on establishing a corporate management system (CODAM) in order to ensure a central and uniform handling of data and metadata within the FSO, but also with the possibility of inclusion of other partners. A central multilingual metadata solution is central to the system.

- **Revision and error-handling policies and practices** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 8, Appropriate statistical procedures)

(Slovenia): Error reporting – SORS' **error reporting procedures** are systematic and polished, and are designed first-and-foremost to meet the needs of users. When an error is discovered, a template (held on their Intranet) is completed. This records suitable metadata about the error. This is then sent to a small group within SORS, including the Director General. A website announcement is then authorised, setting out the correction or the date when a correction might be expected (or when the correction date itself might be known). Subsequently SORS management review what lessons might be learnt.

10. Dissemination

- **Statistical data warehouses and databases** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Poland): Regional Data Bank - a publicly accessible database (http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdren_s/app/strona.indeks) containing statistical information describing the socio-economic situation of particular units of territorial division. This database is an example of a good instrument that may be used to monitor the changes occurring in the long time series, to conduct with multidimensional statistical analyses within regional and local aspects and to make comparisons between the units of territorial division. The continuous process cover works on increase of database functionality as well as on creating clear and user-friendly procedures of search and data processing. Keeping in mind users' amenity and cohesion of statistics used, to the databank's resources is attached module of quarterly data and basic, the most frequently used statistical indicators useful for analytical purposes, the needs of various strategies monitoring and for programming documents.

- **Integrated dissemination system** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Latvia): The ISDMS (Integrated Statistical Data Management System) is an example of a modern, well-structured IT system for statistical processing. The system involves a data warehouse and standardised statistical processing software, which is being used by CSB in 72 surveys. There are opportunities for CSB to realise further benefits in future from this strategic investment in IT and the review team considers the ISDMS to be an example of good practice in the European Statistical System.

(Finland): New integrated production system. System defines a production model and makes possible a target oriented development of statistics production. System standardises dissemination of statistics as an XML-based process, where one document or data can automatically be formatted into different type of publications (printed publication, web page etc.).

- **Presentation/formats/products** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Switzerland) The FSO has **strong dissemination traditions**, not least regarding **cartographic presentations**.

(UK) Experimental statistics: The ONS has developed a concept of "experimental statistics". Such statistics are still in a testing phase and are not fully developed, but the ONS is willing to involve users and other interested parties in the development of new statistics, and to build in quality at the earliest stages. Experimental statistics are introduced by an article on the National Statistics website and in the appropriate "Trends" publication, to explain their concepts and construction, etc. Experimental statistical series are then updated on the National Statistics website, and are accessible via a dedicated area of the "latest releases" section. Information may also appear in paper publications. It is important that these statistics are clearly marked as experimental. To move to the status of national statistics, experimental statistics have to comply with several criteria:

- The defined development phase has ended.
- The statistical methods have proved sufficiently robust to suit a variety of circumstances material to their use.
- Coverage reaches a sufficient level.
- User feedback indicates that the statistics are useful and credible.
- It is judged that the statistics meet the quality standards of National Statistics.

- **Means/modes of dissemination**

- Paper publications

(Poland): External reviews of more important publications and activity of Editorial Committee of the CSO. Editorial Committee is advisory and opinion making body of President of CSO in the range of CSO and regional statistical offices publishing activities. The main tasks of Editorial Committee are: giving opinions on the project of statistical surveys program of official statistics in part regarding publishing activities and making an annual analysis on publishing activities.

- **Websites of statistical authorities/presentation of statistics** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 15, Accessibility and Clarity)

(Ireland) User-friendly policy. The website (<http://www.cso.ie>) as well as the possibility to contact easily statisticians is highly appreciated by all kind of users including journalists. In particular, a contact name and telephone number are given on each statistical release. The peer review team could verify that this practice was very effective in Ireland and decided to highlight it as a good practice, although its generalisation may not be appropriate in every country.

(Sweden) Comprehensive web-site (<http://www.scb.se>) includes user-friendly statistical information, metadata, information about Statistics Sweden and contact points. The web-site gives a good picture of the transparent organisation and its procedures. The amount of English material is also impressive. The overall concept of the web-site fulfils in an out-standing way the usability requirements and is self-explanatory.

(Denmark) User-friendly website. Statbank Denmark (www.statbank.dk) is a very user-friendly data bank. Information on how to proceed to get information, contact persons for each subject and declaration of contents (metadata) are included on the website. It is easy to extract tables (graphics or maps), and numbers can be downloaded and saved in spreadsheets and other formats (PCAxis program is available). Users can get automatic updates of StatBank retrievals. Statistics Denmark bears in mind to international users and a complete version of StatBank Denmark is available in English.

(Slovakia): The SO SR uses its website (<http://portal.statistics.sk>) **for a fluent communication with users.** In the Frequently Asked Questions section (FAQ), a facility has been included where users can communicate with the Office and clarify different aspects of the data disseminated, such as methodology, interpretation of data, complementary information etc. The website is also planned to be used to build relations with interested parties.

(Belgium): Thematic portals on the Internet Site (<http://statbel.fgov.be>). A set of nine thematic portals have been set up on the Internet of Statistics Belgium, such as the business cycle and the environment. Four other portals are in preparation. A thematic portal combines information and data from a wide range sources. Only a part of the information and data originates directly from Statistics Belgium. Any other source of information and data that is available has been added. Some of the portals contain more than 100 useful links. The portal content is basically a large collection of links structured under a few headings within the respective topic. With the thematic portals, Statistics Belgium offers to users an easy to use and very direct facility to get very broadly informed on a specific subject with very little effort for searching and collecting of information on the Internet. The fact that no effort is made to harmonise information that originates from other sources than Statistics Belgium itself does not affect the usefulness of the thematic portal in any way negatively. It well represents the individual and specific characteristics of the various information and data sources that are included in the links.

(Luxembourg) The **specific statistical portal for the Greater Region** (<http://www.grande-region.lu>) (comprising Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Wallonia) is available since the end of 2006 and makes access to data easy. Because of the economic and social interdependencies between the regions the availability of such an information platform across national borders is very valuable for policy makers and the public.

(France) Insee has developed and maintains a **web portal** (<http://www.statistique-publique.fr>) that **gives access to the official statistics released by Insee and the ministerial statistical services**. For users, the portal provides a convenient, harmonised access and search facility to an impressively wide range of data from diverse sources. Insee plans to extend it to cover other data producers.

- **Release policy** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 6, Impartiality and Objectivity)

(Estonia) Equality of access in dissemination Statistics Estonia gives equal access to all its statistical releases at the same day and at the same time without any exception. From the interviews with users it appears that users in Estonia are aware of this practice and both accept and value it.

(Sweden): Statistics Sweden has a very **clear policy not release statistics to anybody before the fixed release time**. No privileged users are accepted. All users have the same access to data at the same time. The time of release is known by the users.

- **Other practices related to dissemination** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 6, Impartiality and Objectivity)

(Romania) There is a **generally respected post-release embargo** for disseminating comments after INS has released the data. Users, and journalists in particular, do not disseminate comments on the new release prior to 1 hour after the INS release becomes available at the pre-announced hour. This allows everybody to spend time on analysing the possible impact of the new data, without the fear of coming too late with own comments. On the other hand, electronic redisseminators of data that do not add comments such as Reuters do not fall under this embargo and can act immediately after the INS release.

(Romania) A **leakage of results before the release time in 2006 was handled in an exemplary way**. At a press conference, the president of INS clearly stated that this is a breach of rule, and that an investigation will take place. Few months later, the media were informed about the results of the investigation, including the sanction to the staff member concerned. This has greatly contributed to users', notably government users', acceptance of the strict policy of INS not to give any pre-release information to anybody outside the INS.

11. Evaluation

- **Quality assurance/Audits/Self-assessments** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 4, Quality commitment)

(Italy) Quality circles as a way to integrate different actors in the process **of preparing the national statistical program and reporting on its implementation**. Quality circles are permanent working groups established by decision of the President of ISTAT covering one sector of the National Statistical Programme. Their purpose is to investigate technical issues faced by official statistics such as integration of sources, rationalisation of statistical production, etc. They include representatives of ISTAT in charge of the 14 sector concerned, representatives of other parts of SISTAN that are directly

involved in the sector, as well as representatives of local authorities, financial institutions, NGOs, universities, etc.

(UK) Quality guidelines: ONS can be considered a leading agency in the development of quality tools for statistics. It is clear that quality is at the heart of the ONS statistical system. Training to all staff and documentation on quality issues is available. The junior staff is aware about the issue of quality both with respect to the making of statistics as well as with respect to the reporting and output. In this context it can be mentioned that the motivation of the staff to produce high quality statistics is clearly visible in the attitude of the staff as well as in the remarks from users and the main stakeholders and that the quality of the statistics of ONS is considered to be of high quality. The new institutional arrangements established from 1st April 2008 are expected to increase the involvement in quality issues for departments involved in official statistics outside the ONS.

(Slovenia): The **system of Advisory Committees** ensures that each statistical domain is subject to a degree of **methodological scrutiny and quality assessment**, by the academic/research community and other users. These Committees are well regarded.

(Austria) Feedback talks. In the framework of Statistics Austria TQM approach, Statistics Austria has introduced standard quality reports to be produced and kept up-to-date for all statistics. The reports are based on the ESS definition of quality in statistics and follow the European standard quality report, and provide an essential basis for "**feedback talks**". These Talks are an important and innovative approach to the **assessment and evaluation of the quality of Statistics Austria's statistical work**. They involve both internal (including the production domain, a peer domain and national accountants) and external experts (such as main users and methodologists). Feedback talks were introduced in mid 2003. They have been carried out - as far as possible on a monthly basis - in co-operation with the quality committee of the Statistical Council with the objective of having all statistics reviewed by end of 2008. The Talks represent a statistical audit function as they aim: - to review statistical methods and the quality of processes in detail - to identify quality improvement potential on the basis of external and internal users' views - to improve the quality reports, and - to define recommendations and actions. The implementation of improvement actions is documented and is itself subject to review.

(Spain) INE Spain has **adopted the European checklist for self-assessment DESAP** and has tailored it to its needs by implementing in it qualitative Standard Quality Indicators. This is a valuable approach that combines European harmonisation and customisation to internal needs. The results of the self-assessment activity have led to improvement actions.

- **User satisfaction surveys** ([Code of Practice](#), Principle 11, Relevance)

(Lithuania) The **user satisfaction surveys** cover general users, web users and specific user groups. The surveys – some outsourced to private opinion institutes - ask for opinions on the following subjects: visibility and image perception, quality of official statistics, internet accessibility, statistical publications, monitoring of user-requests, alert-me services, library-bookshop in Statistics Lithuania head-office and visitors' corners in Regional statistical offices.